The Scroll of the Desert Sojourner

By Jonathan Olvera

1. And it came to pass in the days of dry heat and scorched ground, that I, Jonathan, was born beneath the burning sun of the Southwest, in the land of dust and reptiles, where the wind carried sand and sorrow in equal measure.
2. The work was harsh, and the days long. The world passed by, not seeing the small hell where I dwelt, a place of cracked earth and buried hope. Yet there, among snakes and scorpions, camels and creeping beasts, life continued under Heaven's gaze.
3. I was born into the rule of inheritance, a law written not in stone, but in sweat and fire. It was said that all who lived in that land must labor by game and fair rule. Justice was honored, not always by man, but always before God.
4. I have many memories of hardship, of hunger, and of thirst. Science was no light thing, for in the desert, even knowledge was traded like bread on the open platform—earned, not given.
5. The old beasts had perished; the buffalo had vanished from the plain. In their place came elephants from afar, camels from the east, and creatures brought by the will of men seeking dominion over the land.
6. And they studied the land to make it habitable. They built roads as the Romans had, stretching into the horizon like lines in an ancient scroll. These roads brought many people, and many stories, to the desert gate.
7. I, Jonathan, was among the inhabitants—called to dwell in unity, to learn, to write, and to pass on the knowledge gained from the burning wilderness.
8. Long were the days I searched for water. I scratched at the surface of the hot ash, and lo—underneath was a hidden source, a store of life waiting to be gathered.
9. And I said in my heart: *I must collect this resource and report it to the governors, for the law is Roman, and order must be kept.*
10. I saw then a vision: that this land, once forsaken, could be redeemed. I remembered the lands of my past—the narrow streets of Egypt, the wide sands of Arabia, and the holy cities of Patrís and Capernaum.
11. There, in my youth, I served. I was a servant not in chains, but by choice. I cared for children and bore the burden of my family. My uncle, called Herod, was a drunkard, and the Pharisees, though wise in law, were often foolish in mercy.
12. I labored without chains because I was favored by God in gentleness, and in service.
13. Yet the sword came swiftly upon our people. I fled the killing fields of Spanish Egypt, and the inhospitable deserts of Thess and Africa. And I cried out to the LORD.
14. The God of my fathers heard me. He sent Elijah in a chariot of fire. And with him, I crossed the great waters, as Moses once parted the Red Sea, so I too passed from bondage to freedom—again and again.
15. In America I made my tent. Yet my soul remembered the journey.
16. In a dream I beheld a jungle, and there I found my family once more. By the chariot of Elijah, I traveled between worlds. And though the fire was hot, the LORD was with me.

17. I returned to the land of brimstone and ash, where the lizards scatter and the hawk circles overhead. There I pitched my camp again, and there I write this scroll, that you may know the story of the desert sojourner.

Scripture Reflection (Inspired by Isaiah, Exodus, and Psalms)

Isaiah 43:19
"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

Exodus 14:21–22
"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back… And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left."

Psalm 63:1
"O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

Closing Prayer

O LORD, God of the desert and of the sea,
You who guided Moses, Elijah, and the sojourner—
Guide us still in our dry places.
Let rivers spring from our struggles,
Let fire purify our paths,
And let the knowledge gained in hardship
Become light for generations to come. Amen.